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OP INSPECTION ISSUES

ISOLATED PROBLEMS

- Background

-- A number of complaints were encountered in the customer survey that are regarded as isolated problems by the Inspection Team. It is not intended to include specific mention of these in the OP Inspection Report or to take further action beyond passing them informally to the OP for their consideration and, if appropriate, corrective action.

- Customer Perceptions

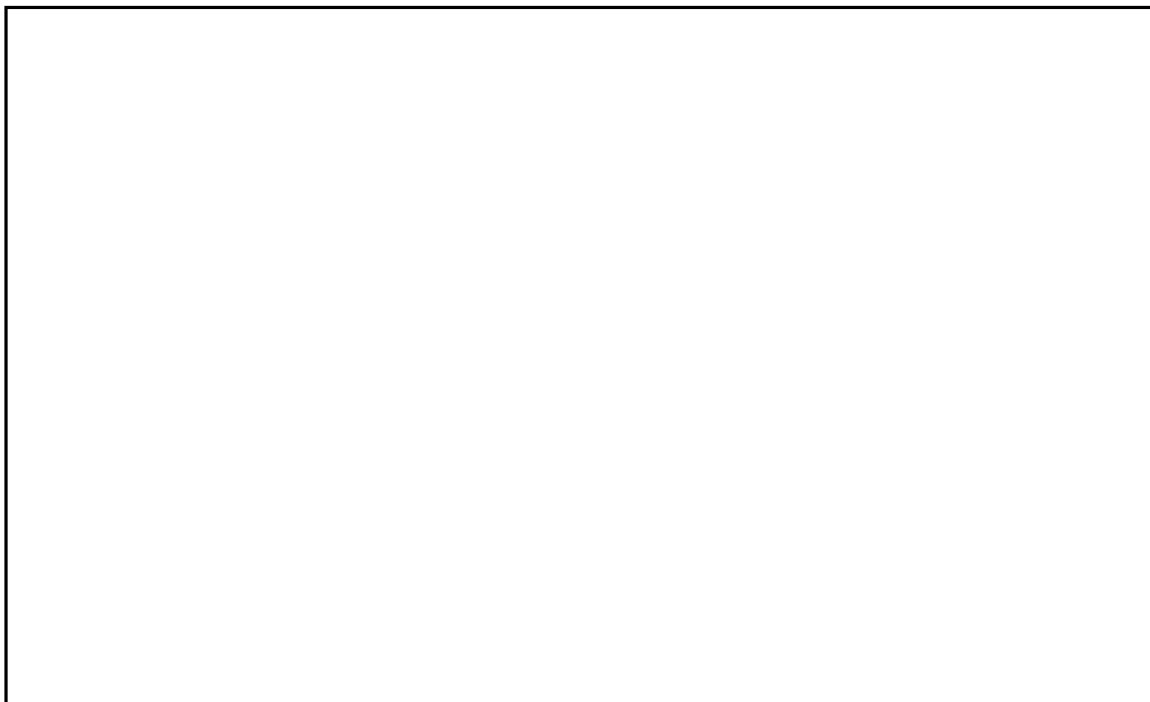
-- There is a frequently held opinion that some OP approvals are now required on minor matters where decisions are actually made in the components. This generally causes extra paperwork and expends time unnecessarily. Examples given by various components included employee placement actions, personnel actions, and actions involving shortened overseas tours. OP investigation into these, and perhaps other cases, could lead to changes reducing somewhat the bureaucratic aspects of OP activities.

-- Some component managers indicated a desire to receive more information than they now have available on new developments in managerial techniques. It was noted that Agency sources of such information are now limited to OTR and occasionally OMS and that there appeared to be little OP contribution to these issuances or to OTR management courses. OP could investigate the feasibility and desirability of assembling and providing such information to component

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-- The recruiting and applicant processing system is a subject covered separately in this IG survey. A number of isolated problems associated with this system were raised during the customer survey that will not be covered specifically in the broader investigation, however.



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--- Requirements for the arrival of PATB test results to coincide with the receipt of applications in Headquarters is, in the view of several recruiters and some component heads, a significant contributor to delay in the recruiting/processing sequence and probably costs the Agency some good applicants. It may be worthwhile for the OP to review these requirements with operating components to see if the test can be dispensed with or its timing delayed so that it does not hold up the whole process.

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--- Some adverse comments were received concerning handling of applicants by the Rosslyn office. In one case a supervisor cited instances where applicants left the office with the impression that their applications were to be put in process, when in fact there was no such intention. Another component indicated that Rosslyn was guilty of objectionable handling and even turning away part-time clerical applicants who had been located by the component and encouraged to apply, and who had written evidence to that effect. Some checking by OP of the supervision and the performance of the Rosslyn office would appear to be desirable.

--- Several supervisors questioned whether the Agency was modifying its policies on applicant rejections based on marijuana use or cohabitation at a rate consistent with the changing social views of these problems. It is recognized that OP is only one participant in decisions on such matters, but the Office should be aware of this view.

--- One supervisor believes that insufficient pay drives many Coop applicants away. Another supervisor suggests that OP may be understaffed in the Coop recruitment area. This supervisor also feels that the OP Coop program has been slipping of late, with a number of pedestrian but important problems faced by the Coops being unheard. It should be noted in connection with these suggestions that the Coop program is widely regarded as a great success.

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--- The summer intern program is also regarded as a great success. One supervisor suggests that the administration of this program is too complicated. He notes that processing now requires longer than the 5-6 weeks that used to be sufficient.

--- One supervisor feels that the OP should develop a better and standardized system for processing incoming occupants of special accommodation slots in the Agency. These are slots belonging to NSA, and in the future DIA, whose incumbents work full time as integrated personnel in an Agency component. Apparently OP lacks an established procedure for in-processing and managing incumbents of these positions.

--- It was noted that filing practices vary widely at the several field recruiting offices. It is not clear that uniform files are needed, since the files are temporary and for local use only. Some uniform minimum standards and procedures might be desirable, however.

--- Handling of Personal Service Contracts was generally praised. The General Counsel believes closer liaison with his office is needed for non-standard contracts to insure their legality. The Office of Finance would like more standardization among the contracts to simplify OF problems and suggested that paperwork could be avoided by including provisions for step increases and the like in the contract. Incidentally, most supervisors were asked their views on moving the hard personnel files on contract employees to the Office of Personnel and essentially no objection to this proposal was encountered.

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-- General praise was accorded the Central Processing function. A number of minor comments were encountered, however.

--- Four supervisors felt that Central Processing was slow and cumbersome in handling necessarily short lead-times for some foreign travel requests. This comment was not reflected by other supervisors, however, and two of the four who made the comments do not use Central Processing for such travel.

--- Several supervisors suggested that the mesh between Central Processing and Commercial & Cover Staff is inadequate. One suggested assigning a CCS man to Central Processing; another suggested assigning an OP man to CCS.

--- Several supervisors mentioned occasional problems with obtaining visas through Central Processing. It is suspected that the responsibilities for obtaining the visas are not clearly defined or, perhaps, made clear to the traveler. In this connection, one supervisor suggested that Central Processing provide special counselling for travelers making their first trip overseas to be sure that they understand which of the trip preparation functions they are responsible for.

--- One supervisor suggested that Central Processing maintain information on recommended hotel accommodations in foreign countries.

-- The Insurance Programs were widely praised and the few criticisms were relatively low key:

--- Many components indicated that the claim processing time was lengthy on occasion, but none appear to feel that it was a very serious problem.

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--- Some components felt that more information and instructions to the field, particularly the Handbook now in preparation, are needed. It was also suggested that support people going overseas be better instructed in insurance procedures.

--- There were several suggestions that the claims representative in the Insurance Office be present for longer periods than is now the case. It was noted that several of the suggestors did not understand that they do not have to see this representative in order to file a claim. Better communication with customers and perhaps instructions posted on the wall of the Insurance Office would clearly help.

--- One supervisor suggested that he would find a machine run of component personnel who are not covered by insurance very useful during insurance open seasons.

-- The Credit Union was very well regarded. Almost the only suggestion was that expansion of the hours of operation at the office would be useful.

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-- One supervisor suggested that the Agency needs a standard policy governing the use of Federal space, people, and money for service functions such as the Credit Union, Insurance, EAA, PSAS, and the like. Each now has a separate policy and he feels that a more general set of ground rules would be more defensible if this support is attacked, as it was in the case of the VIP program.

-- The Agency Awards Program was widely praised. Several supervisors felt, however, that it had tended to become routine and

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that the requirement for paperwork associated with awards consideration is excessive.

-- The Special Activities Staff was widely praised for its performance in handling forced separation actions. One supervisor criticized the openness in handling such actions and felt that SAS interest in a person should be more closely held. Another supervisor, however, felt it useful that Agency activity in separating inefficient employees receives such occasional low key advertisement. Still another supervisor indicated that the Special Activities Staff got somewhat out of step with OP/OGC planning about the Schlesinger RIF. It appears likely that that complaint deals with water long over the dam, however.

-- Some supervisors criticized the practice of disseminating only adverse exit interviews. They suggest either that all or none of the exit interviews be distributed.

-- The Chief of Division D/DDO is concerned that regulations governing extensive TDY tours need review and revision. More details can, undoubtedly, be obtained from him.

-- One supervisor, in talking about outdated OP machine runs, pointed out that he was periodically queried on the basis of data two to three months old about personnel overages which had turned into shortages before he ever got the question. This is primarily a product of out-of-date records, but some steps to insure a check of current information before such queries are made would probably help OP customer relations.

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-- One customer suggested that OP and the Office of Security get together and devise a single form for FECA reports covering on-duty accidents. Apparently each office needs the same information and now requires it on two quite different forms.

-- One supervisor is concerned about the inclusion of a considerable amount of EYES ONLY material in hard personnel files and suggests that this practice be examined.

-- The Deputy Director of the Office of Finance believes that OP is not keeping sufficiently up to date on changes in Civil Service regulations. OP is supposed to report such changes to the Office of Finance and some have a considerable affect on the OF work load in FSLA or pay or leave computations.

-- There was some praise and some complaints regarding the quality of personnel careerists serving in components. The most common complaint was that the careerists were more interested in paperwork and mechanics than in people and policy and were rarely of use in advising component personnel and managers on personnel matters broader than mechanical details.

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